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Sir L. Namier in his book *CONFLICTS* says, 'Democracy implies political rights, irrespective of birth and wealth, and some agreed method of choosing and changing rulers, a power which, to be properly exercised, requires a reasonable nature of political liberty'. The three different aspects of social life and organisation covered by democracy are civic equality, self-government and freedom of thought.

Democracy transcends the West; its appeal is universal. The idea of freedom which is embodied in democracy seems to strike a sympathetic chord in the human heart. In terms of politics and institutions, democracy has at least five essential characteristics:

1. Equality under the law.
2. Equality of voting.
3. Periodic election of representatives.
4. Legislation by majority rule.
5. Freedom of political action and policy-making.

These are the rock-bottom features. There may be more to democracy – social welfare, for example – but there cannot ever be less.

Democracy expects a great deal from man. It requires patience and prudence and compassion and good will. It calls for, in addition another quality not easily come by, namely, civil alertness and an active desire for freedom. Altogether its attainment must always constitute a challenge to man.

## Introduction

Democracy is difficult to define. It has never been easy to say with precision and inclusiveness what democracy is. Being essentially a humane polity, that is, one that is on the ideological plane rooted in ethics and justice, an understanding of it may lie in feelings as much as in reason. It is not a mere form of government. According to a political thinker, to say that democracy is only a form of government is like saying that home is more or less a geometrical arrangement of bricks and mortar, or that a church is a building with pews, pulpit and spire. Democracy is also defined as an attitude of mind of those who profess it, and only those who profess it can practise it. One may say that there are two general aspects to democracy: the political-institutional and the behavioural. On the behavioural level, democracy has wider applications. It is 'a way of life'. It is a way of looking at things. It is a way of feeling about humanity and society. It is a way of political behaviour. It is a way of acting toward one's fellow creatures and even toward one's own family. Consciously or unconsciously, the belief in and the practice of democracy affects one's whole behaviour, from everyday manners to life expectations.

## History

The word itself is old; it was first used by the ancient Greeks in the fifth century B.C. It is, indeed, a Greek term, combining the two words 'demos', the people, and 'kratos', authority. The term 'democracy' made its historic appearance in the *History of Peoloponnesian War* when used by historian Thucydides (460-400B.C.) According to Thucydides, Pericles received of democracy as a form of government in which all people enjoy equality under the laws, with officials elected merit rather than on the basis of class, and based on the principle that the many are wiser than the few. But this democracy did not long survive. The strife and chaos of post-Spartan Greece, which may or may not have been the result of Athenian democratic practices, brought both the system and